

(16) For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.

(18) Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: *the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.* For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.

(22) After this Jesus and His disciples went into the Judean countryside, and He remained there with them and was baptizing. John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and the people were coming and being baptized (for John had not yet been put in prison).

(25) Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification. And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness --- look, He is baptizing, and all are going to Him." John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before Him.'

(29) The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore, this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease.

(31) He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. He bears witness to what He has seen and heard, yet no one receives His testimony. Whoever receives His testimony set his seal to this, that God is true. For He whom God sent utters the words of God, for He gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Think on these things:

- 1) There is an interesting emphasis in Greek for the word "perish" in v.16. In 'middle voice', it has the meaning of something 'we do to ourselves.' The word translated perish, also means to destroy. Thus, if we choose NOT to believe in Jesus, what are we doing to ourselves? Heaven or Hell, then, is not what God does to us. Does this broader understanding impact you?

The meaning is by choosing NOT to believe in Jesus, we "destroy ourselves" rather than accept the salvation offered by Jesus. There is no blaming God here; we do this to ourselves. The goal is for class members to realize that being saved is up to them. Salvation or self-destruction...?

- 2) Why did God send His Son into our world (v.16-17)? From v.18, who will not be judged, and who is already judged?

Why Jesus was sent by the Father? God loves the people and all His creations in this world. He sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to "save" it. Salvation, not condemnation, was God's purpose for His Son's first advent (coming). Salvation & condemnation will be the 2nd advent.

Judgment – Who is, who isn't? Those believing in Jesus will not be subject to eternal life/death judgment. The "unbelieving" are already judged in God's eyes.

3) Let's take a moment to study New Testament Judgment. Which one is unique to Christians?

Matthew 16:26-27. Judgment of **works, according to what each of us has done in this life.**

Matthew 25:31-33 and Revelation 20:11-15. Judgment of **salvation for all the nations' peoples of the world from all time eras. God will separate believers like sheep from goats at the Great White Throne judgment. Those who names are missing from the Book of Life will go to eternal separation from God (death) in Hell.**

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 and 2 Corinthians 5:10. Judgment of **Christian believers' works. Those works deemed worthy after God's scrutiny will result in rewards for the believer, but those rejected add up to nothing. (This is the judgment unique to Christians, and it's not about salvation in heaven or condemnation in hell.)**

4) There is interesting imagery in the darkness & light discussions. Envision someone turning on the lights in a room and noting that the cockroaches go scurrying for cover. God describes humankind in similar terms: as His light approaches, men run from Him! Why does John say people run from God? What should Christians do? Consider Matthew 5:14-16.

Mankind runs from God so that their works of darkness won't be exposed for all to see. Christians come into the light of God so that God is glorified.

5) Jesus and His disciples were ministering to the Jews near where John the Baptist was ministering with his disciples. Comment on these thoughts from verses 23-30:

Who was baptizing (see also John 4:1-2)? – **Jesus' disciples, not Jesus Himself.**

How did John's disciples respond? – **They were jealous of the bigger crowds moving towards Jesus' ministry.**

Did John agree with their concern? – **No, John was glad to see Jesus' ministry enlarging.**

V.30 could be accepted as a Christian axiom. In John's testimony, what is his insightful, yet simple, life statement about Jesus?

(In my life...) **"He (Jesus) must increase, but I must decrease." (We all need to die to self...)**

6) What does the "one whom God sent" do (vs. 34-35)? What has the Father entrusted to the Son?

Do? **He speaks God's words and gives the Holy Spirit without limits.**

Entrusted with? **The Father has entrusted "all things" to His Son, Jesus.**

7) Who possesses eternal life? When does s/he get it (v.36)? Upon whom does God's wrath rest?

Whoever believes and receives Jesus possesses eternal life from that point onward (we don't wait until we go to heaven; life begins now). All those who reject the Son remain subject to the wrath of God the Father upon all evildoers in the world.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: